



bowtieallergy

Board-certified Specialist

ANGIOEDEMA *a.k.a. giant, disfiguring swelling*

Angioedema is a relatively uncommon condition affecting the skin and the linings of the gastrointestinal and respiratory tracts. It is important to distinguish angioedema from hives, the latter of which are itchy and non-disfiguring. Usually, angioedema symptoms are skin pain along with disfiguring swelling more on one side of the body than the other during an attack. Commonly affected areas are the face, underarms, groin, hands and feet. The swelling generally lasts 3-5 days, unlike the shorter-lived hives, above. Regardless, if you're about to lose your airway, use your Epinephrine auto-injector (e.g. EpiPen) first and then dial 9-1-1 immediately.

The causes for angioedema can be the same as for hives, above, but also include a rare, hereditary form. There is a specific, special medication for the familial form that is different from the rest of the causes of hives/angioedema, and patients with this type of angioedema generally do not have hives as part of their constellation of symptoms.

To add more confusion to an already confusing situation, patients with angioedema can have hives at the same time during angioedema attacks. Thankfully, patients with hives and angioedema tend to be responsive to oral antihistamines. Avoiding the provocative allergen can be critical as well.

To learn more about your allergies, call Bowtie Allergy Specialists for an appointment. Remember that knowledge alone empowers you to needing fewer visits with your doctors.